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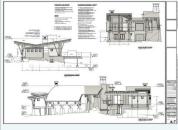
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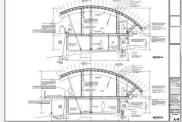
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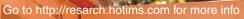


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A touch of blue adds boldness to Bell Architects' 1880s workspace in Washington, D.C. Photo: Anice Hoachlander Cover photo: Matthew Millman

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The 1960s were revolutionary in many ways, but house design was not one of them. Watered-down modern ideals resulted in suburbs full of lackluster shoeboxes. We

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We've all been trained that specing recycled materials is good green practice. But all that glitters isn't necessarily golden—sometimes new and near is better by far.

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When Washington, D.C.-based Bell Architects went looking for an old row house to resuscitate for its offices, it picked the most decrepit one it could find.



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by s. claire conroy

o one loves ink on paper more than I do. It's the reason I became a writer in the first place. The great thing about journalism versus, say, the fiction-writing profession is you get to see the ink on paper you've created even more frequently. In my experience, architects (at least those of a certain age) also love ink on paper. They think nothing of spending what little money they have on a beautiful coffee table book about their favorite artist or peer.

Unfortunately, the ink on paper industry is under siege. You may have noticed that both the number and size of pages in this magazine have contracted substantially since the go-go years. I think all of us who love magazines, newspapers, and books feel the dimming of this light acutely. But we have to take courage in the knowledge that while the medium is changing, the message will continue.

Our culture's insatiable hunger for information continues unabated—in fact, I believe it's growing. If you've noticed only the thickness of *residential architect*, then you may

have missed all of the other initiatives that have consumed our energy and attention in the past few years. Our annual Reinvention Symposium has a strong showing every year, with many repeat attendees. This year, Dec. 6–8, we'll be in New Orleans.

And not so long ago, the staff of ra took the reins of those e-newsletters that appear biweekly in your email inbox, to better target your concerns and interests.

If you've clicked through any of the links in the most recent e-newsletters then you've discovered our latest and, perhaps, greatest effort: a redesign of our website, www.residentialarchitect. com. Boy, was this long overdue and sorely needed! We accomplished not only a redesign, but a complete reinvention (to use one of our favorite words) of the site.

We've organized the topline navigation around the core topics we've always explored in the magazine profiles of residential architects, residential projects, products, practice issues, and news and happenings relevant to the design community. We also have a dedicated place to find special projects—our Architects' Choice guide to products, the winning projects of our Design Awards,



Mark Robert Halper

our Leadership Award winners, and coverage of our Reinvention Symposium.

But I think the coolest feature of the new site is the ability to browse architects by location and specialty, and projects by type and location. You also can peruse products we've covered by category.

These are steps forward in our goal to not only better serve you, but to act as a conduit between you and your potential clients as well. Our magazine goes only to residential architects in North America, sometimes falling into the hands of the laypublic in architects' waiting areas and conference rooms. But our website is open to

everyone—architects and would-be clients all over the globe.

For the first time anywhere, we have the beginnings of a curated, national collection of profiles of residential architects and their work. And our mission of spreading the word about the value and abilities of residential architects moves ahead at cyber speed.

Our print edition will continue and I hope, when the market comes back, will grow again. Our mission is best executed on all communications fronts. Maybe someday as an iPad app, sent right to your lap. ra

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letters

exercise your right to write.

more on "less is less"

hanks for the insight in your January/ February editorial ("Less Is Less," page 8). How true, but you don't say how we got here. The plight of consumerism is that consumers will buy anything from anyone at any time. Buyers, educated or not, hire an engineer or contractor to provide design services, partly out of expediency, partly the result of education, and mostly because of comfort level. "More for less" naturally confers a level of comfort and cinches the deal in the end.

And the architect historically provides more, constantly for less. There isn't anyone else on the construction site more circumspect in understanding, either. But getting him to perform like he knows requires, it would appear, bold acts of leadership. Insurers and lawyers advise against taking the lead, admonish responsibility for deeds other than signing a B-141, and reduce bold action to statements of acceptable opinion.

Architects' strength is in knowing the big picture, knowing their expertise, and knowing what they don't know. That's the mold for a leader or manager. At crunch time the client turns to their fearless leader, whomever that may be. The architect is in the ideal position to lead, isn't always there, and his aspirants are queued up, immediately behind, in growing numbers.

Allen E. Neyman, AIA
NSArchitects
Rockville, Md.

wanted to let you know that I really enjoyed your latest editorial and passed it around our office. We have the attitude that the best way to avoid liability is to do a good job, be involved, and try to help solve problems. In order to do that, you have to be actively involved in as much of the project as possible—you never know where the problems are going to pop up. We probably break the AIA's recommendations fairly regularly. Rather than avoiding issues to avoid liability, by staying involved we try to avoid problems in the first place. No problems = no liability. We get pretty involved with helping contractors coordinate the project (though not their "means and methods"), deal with budgets,

whatever it takes. Sometimes it feels like we should head into the design/build world since we're dealing with so many of the issues anyway. However, we still feel like the architecture side is the fun part and leave the actual building to someone else. So far we've stayed out of trouble, gotten our projects built, and have many satisfied clients. Now if only we could find more clients these days ...

Allan Farkas, AIA Eggleston Farkas Architects Seattle

hank you for your editorial "Less Is Less."
You have raised issues that are the undoing of the architectural profession. However, rather than a frightful glimpse at a competitor, your "project manager" may actually be showing design professionals a means to a sustainable future for the design professions.

Perhaps the ideas inherent in your editorial are the seeds of a much needed re-evaluation of what architects do—in light of your project manager's full service (and fees), it is easy to dismiss what professional architects are calling and selling clients

as design today.

There are clients that expect more than just the safe commodity that many professionals describe as "architecture." Many clients are not surprised by the extent and fees associated with "design"—it is what they expect.

Frank Mascia, FAIA, ACHA CDG Architects Tucson, Ariz.

read your editorial "less is less" in the Jan./Feb. issue of residential architect with great appreciation for your thesis that architects have done a disservice to themselves by shrugging off the majority of services that were once considered part and parcel to being an architect. I was dismayed, though, how in your anecdote about the house designed by an over-achieving electrical engineer, you let your (understandable) disdain for residential designerswho-are-not-architects get the best of you. In my state, there is no license for building designers, and I doubt that there is one in your state. As such, the term "unlicensed building designer" is as much of a paradox as "licensed

continued on page 12

architect" is a redundancy. Irrelevant and overstated digs like that convey a bitterness that just serves to detract from the point of an otherwise very good piece of work.

Dianne Davis Greenpoint Design Associates Forest, Va.

our "less is less"
piece was so on
the mark—the
gradual erosion of
our scope of services has been a sore spot
with me for many years.
Here's why:

Architects have abdicated their role as master builders and become "design team members" led by any party willing to step up to the plate and take charge to see a project through from conception to completion. We have shirked our responsibilities in the interest of risk management and farmed out work that was traditionally within our expertise to a host of consultants-even on simple residential projects an architect typically shares responsibility (and billing) with others—such as project managers, structural and civil engineers, landscape architects, and even interior designers.

I graduated 30 years ago from a traditional five-year B.Arch program—we got an intense education which, besides architectural design, included structures, site design, and some mechanical and electrical. After my three-year internship, I knew enough to design my projects and knew when to (rarely) call in a consultant.

On a residence, who better to do the landscape design, structure, or interiors than the mind that conceives the entire whole from concept to finish?

College graduates and even licensed people I hire today seem to be lacking a basic knowledge of how a building is put together—and these people have master's degrees! What is happening here?

I sometimes think this problem stems from the basic psychological makeup of the average architecttypically we tend to be somewhat introverted. That, and the fear of sticking our necks out lest we get sued. Other less-qualified parties are willing to take the bull by the horns and do the jobs we should be doing. Architects, don't be afraid! We belong to an honorable and learned profession. Get out there and be the project leaders. Somebody has to do it-and that somebody is us.

> J. Brud Weger Weger Architects York, Maine

applaud your chutzpah for printing your January/February editorial. I was just having a similar spirited conversation with some architectural peers. I have been practicing for just 20 years and strongly feel that architects are losing the position of leader in the industry. For the past two years my work has been more focused on the commercial/public sector, and I have seen the leadership role taken over by the construction manager. As architects, we are becoming subcontractors. I recently was involved in an architect selection process for a project where the owner hired the construction manager first to assist them with hiring the architect. Hello—let's wake up here!

I think as a profession we need to get our hands dirty and take some risk. This change is going to be hard, but maybe this "reset" in the industry will give us the opportunity to change our destinies.

Many times I have used the phrase "lead or get out of the way" when describing a situation. Architects have stepped aside, and the leadership role has been taken over by the construction industry—or, in the case of your article, an electrical engineer.

Mike Elliott, AIA, LEED AP
Kluber Architects +
Engineers
Batavia. Ill.

hen I left high school in Argentina to attend college in the United States, my goal was to become an artist. However, my father had other ideas: I was to attend Williams College for its "MIT Program," whereby I would transfer to MIT to become an engineer.

My accommodation was to inform my father that I would become an architect, half engineer, half artist. He reluctantly bought into the idea and I was "spared" transferring to MIT.

After Williams, I went to Penn, during the heady days of Louis Kahn and the Philadelphia School. There were courses such as "Methods and Materials" and "Structure." At the time I wondered why I had to study this unpleasant stuff. Surely all that mattered was "design."

Over the years I have seen us architects give up more and more of our profession to lighting designers, skin consultants, specification writers, owners' representatives, programmers, cost consultants, and even, sadly, to "designers."

So I got what I deserved!

F. Cecil Baker, AIA Cecil Baker + Partners Philadelphia

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.



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home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.



rebuilding haiti

Architects and other housing professionals in the United States and beyond have been mobilizing to help the people of earthquake-devastated Haiti. Bolstered by fundraising events such as the worldwide PechaKucha Night for Haiti, which raised about \$75,000 for Architecture for Humanity, nonprofit organizations have begun the intensive groundwork required to prepare for rebuilding efforts. "When you're starting to think about rebuilding, land records are usually inaccessible or destroyed," says Kate Stohr, managing director of Architecture for Humanity. "Even if they have records, the land is not 'clear title,' so you have to start at the beginning and figure out who owns it."

Andrés Duany and his staff at Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. created a prototype of the Haiti Cabin, right, for manufacture by InnoVida Holdings (floorplan shown below). InnoVida is donating 1,000 of these and other panelized units to relief efforts in Haiti.



Stohr's group has placed a handful of staffers in Haiti to focus on these issues, and they plan to open a rebuilding center in Port-au-Prince this April. The center will provide design and construction administration services to other nonprofit and community-based organizations. Architecture for Humanity also has completed a free Rebuilding 101 manual written in Creole, French, Spanish, and English that is available online and at the rebuilding center. "So many people are doing self-help housing, in which they build their homes themselves," Stohr says. "The goal is to educate the builder and consumer so they demand—and build—safer housing and buildings." To the same end, the group is working on making plans available for "core housing" prototypes that can be added to over time, and it also has partnered with Appropriate Infrastructure Development Group to train local masons in earthquake-safe masonry construction techniques.

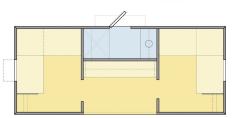
Habitat for Humanity, too, offers core housing designs that have been adapted to Haiti's geography and culture. The organization is preparing to build its first 50 earthquake-resistant core houses on a site outside Port-au-Prince. It also has constructed some hurricane-resistant transitional shelter prototypes inside the city. "Another thing hindering permanent construction is the need for excavation and extrication," notes Mario Flores, director of

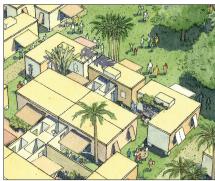
disaster response field operations for Habitat for Humanity International. "The rubble still has to be cleared." Habitat is distributing 10,000 emergency shelter kits to help Haitians through the upcoming rainy season and has trained engineers and other building professionals to inspect structures for earthquake damage. "We have an aspirational number of 20,000 permanent houses in Haiti," Flores adds. "It's aspirational in the sense that we don't have the funding to do that, yet."

Andrés Duany, FAIA, principal and founding partner of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. in Miami, is working with InnoVida Holdings, a prefab building company that uses fiber-composite panels to create earthquake- and hurricane-resistant structures. InnoVida has pledged to donate 1,000 units to Haiti—some designed by Duany and his firm—and to open a factory there later this year, so the buildings can be manufactured locally.

For more on the rebuilding of Haiti and to learn how you can help, visit the online version of this article at www.residentialarchitect.com.
—meghan drueding

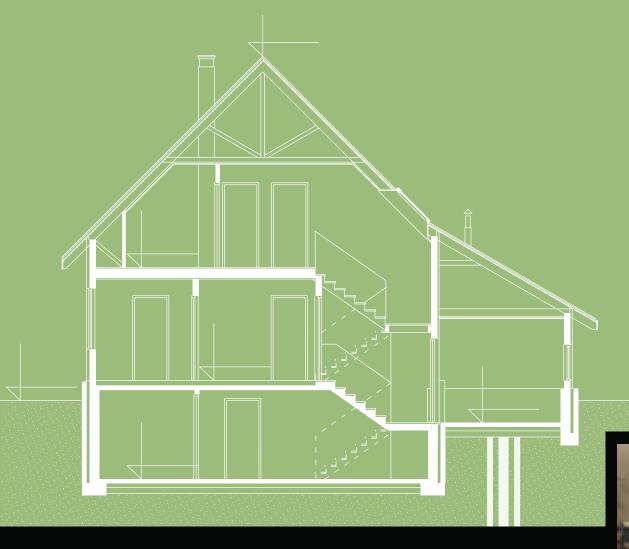
Duany and his colleagues envisioned several different layouts for the cabin, depending on the unit's location and the living situation of its occupants. They also suggested various configurations, shown at right and opposite, based on density and geographic conditions.





Courtesy Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co





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this renewed house

a 1912 craftsman had loads of character and lots of energy loss.

or all the talk about sustainable building in new construction, a more pressing issue often missing from the conversation is America's existing stock of energy-inefficient housing units. The Glanville Residence in Newton, Mass., used to be one of those houses—until Boston-based ZeroEnergy Design (ZED) gave it a high-performance energy upgrade.

The 4,570-square-foot Craftsman, which Boston architect James H. Ritchie designed for himself in 1912, was in relatively good architectural and structural shape. Ritchie included many of the latest features and con-

struction technologies available to him at the time, and the home's second owner—another architect—made minor improvements and renovated the kitchen.

Still, the house was built in the 20th century and clearly needed to be brought into the new millennium. "Using infrared cameras, we found that the wall insulation wasn't too bad and wasn't sagging," says project architect Stephanie Horowitz, AIA, ZED's managing director. "But the roof insulation was barely meeting code and was a great source of energy loss." The firm also performed blower door tests to obtain a more complete energy-performance picture.

Armed with the data, the ZED team removed the roof's existing wool insulation, sprayed 6 inches of foam into the ceiling, and insulated the basement walls. They also completely overhauled the mechanical system, adding a high-efficiency boiler and installing new ducts in the conditioned attic space. A new heat recovery ventilator helps bring in fresh air, and 54 Energy Star–rated windows tighten the building envelope. For good measure, they added low-flow fixtures, recycled glass tile in the remodeled bathrooms, and a rainwater collection system.

Updating an old house—especially one whose life history spans nearly a century—is a challenge, but not in the way you might think. The technology is readily available, Horowitz says, but budget limitations can complicate matters considerably. Building a home from the ground up "achieves greater efficiency and higher levels of [energy] performance," she admits, but if it's done in the right





Photos: Michael J. Lee

The Glanville Residence was plagued by single-pane windows, a 1960s-era boiler, and asbestos insulation. ZeroEnergy updated the structure with cellulose wall insulation, aluminum-clad (and architecturally accurate) wood windows, and energy-efficient lighting. The architects retained usable elements such as the wood millwork, but completely redid the bathrooms with glass tiles and modern faucets and fixtures (top).

way, upgrading an old house can significantly benefit both the environment and the client—as it did in this case. "The occupants are comfortable, the home isn't drafty anymore, and the livability is very much improved."—nigel f. maynard

k+b studio

kitchen:

natural instincts

William S. Duff Jr., AIA, and his clients approached ecofriendliness in a holistic way at the Wheeler Residence in Menlo Park, Calif. They wanted the entire house, including the kitchen, to reflect a subtle yet strong environmental commitment—one that happily co-existed with the architecture. "The key notion of the project is that sustainability is fully integrated into the design of the home," Duff says.

To that end, he created an L-shaped, freestanding wall that carves out room for the kitchen at the center of the house. Because it sits within a large, open space, the wall also serves

to define a formal living room and a main circulation spine. It stops about 2 feet below the ceiling, allowing natural breezes to waft over the kitchen and up through a cooling tower in the adjacent family room. And the wall's lowered height lets ample daylight into the space, lessening the need for electric lighting. Another key element of Duff's sustainable approach—a radiant heat system powered by a rooftop solar array—is embedded in floors of stained



Clerestory windows, above and opposite, facilitate passive cooling, and the home's rooftop holds both solar hot water and photovoltaic panels. flyash concrete. The kitchen cabinetry and millwork consist of a mahogany veneer on a 98 percent recycled core, and all appliances are Energy Star-rated.

Like most modern families, the clients desired a casual dining area in the kitchen. So Duff's team cleverly attached an engineered stone table at a 90 degree angle to the taller island, made of the same material. The effect suggests an angular waterfall, and the table neatly divides the kitchen from the family room. "The idea is that you get the same cascading volumes in the kitchen as elsewhere in the house," Duff explains. —*meghan drueding*

project continued on page 20

project: Wheeler Residence, Menlo Park, Calif.

architect: William Duff Architects, San Francisco

general contractor: Bay West Enterprises, Redwood City, Calif.

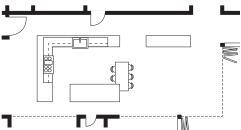
landscape designer: T. Delaney/Seam Studio, San Francisco

resources: accordion doors: NanaWall Systems; convection steam oven, vent hood: Miele; countertops: CaesarStone USA; dishwasher: Bosch Home Appliances; kitchen fittings and fixtures: Dornbracht Americas, Julien, Kohler Co.; lighting fixtures: DaSal Industries, LEDS-C4 (GROK); paints/stains/wall finishes: Dunn-Edwards Corp., L.M. Scofield Co.; range, wall ovens, warming drawer: Thermador; refrigerator, wine chiller: Viking Range Corp.; tile (glass): Ann Sacks Tile & Stone.





Photos: Lucas Fladzinski / www.fladzinski.com

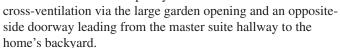


Accordion doors, left, link the kitchen to the backyard and pool area, promoting daylight and natural ventilation. A 2-foot gap between the kitchen walls and ceiling, above, accomplishes a similar feat.

k+b studio

bath: teak experience

Like the kitchen in this Menlo Park, Calif., house, the master bath boasts a strong connection to the outdoors. Architect William S. Duff Jr., AIA, placed it next to a private master suite garden that uses a wooden fence and lush landscaping to block the neighbors' view. Glass accordion doors fold back to link the bathtub and vanity area to the garden any time the clients wish. When they crave additional privacy, they can close the doors and pull down built-in shades. The room draws plenty of



Duff chose materials that convey a sense of harmony and order. Soothing green glass tiles clad the freestanding tub, the vanity backsplash, and the shower walls, continuing all the way up to the ceiling and even extending to the strip of wall above the accordion doors. Slate tile flooring echoes the gray engineered quartz vanity top, which matches the kitchen counters.

The slate segues into a series of teak slats that start just outside the shower enclosure and envelop the tub. They're spaced slightly apart and sit atop a hidden dropout and drain for collecting excess water, "so you can step out of the bath or shower and drip," Duff explains. He and his team kept the slats going right up the wall on the far side of the tub. The combination of earthy teak and glossy tile achieves a perfect blend of warm and cool tones, making the bath an ideal place to relax and unwind. —*m.d.*

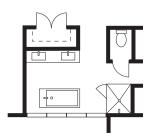


Photos: Matthew Millman



The home's study, clad in wood composite panels, creates a protected courtyard that acts as an al fresco extension of the master bath. Inside, a consistent use of teak and tile in complementary earth tones pulls the room together in a soothingly organic way.

resources: accordion doors: NanaWall Systems; bathroom fittings: waterdecor; bathroom fixtures: Americh Corp. (Zuma Collection), Dornbracht Americas, TOTO USA; countertops: CaesarStone USA; flooring (slate): American Slate Co.; shades: Lutron Electronics Co.; tile (glass): Original Style; towel warmer: Myson.





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the trouble next door

how architects and their clients deal with obtructionist neighbors.

by cheryl weber, leed ap

hen Ted Flato, FAIA, purchased a classic old San Antonio house and painted it red, a longtime resident of the neighborhood wasted no time expressing her disapproval. "Aren't there rules against that?" she sniffed. The house had been a dreadful drab green that blended in with the area's enormous oak trees. "Unbeknownst to her, it had been screaming for 90 years before we showed up that it wanted to be terra-cotta," says Flato, co-principal of LakelFlato Architects of San Antonio.

He chuckles about it now. The confrontation was unpleasant but harmless, and Flato had her pegged simply as someone who resisted change. Luckily, she didn't start a neighborhood petition demanding a different color. Nor did she put up a sign calling the house an eyesore, assault the painters, or send in the lawyers, as many architects have experienced on behalf of their clients. It seems everyone has a story about the neighbor from hell, suggesting that no one is immune from the person intent on derailing the construction of a house next door.



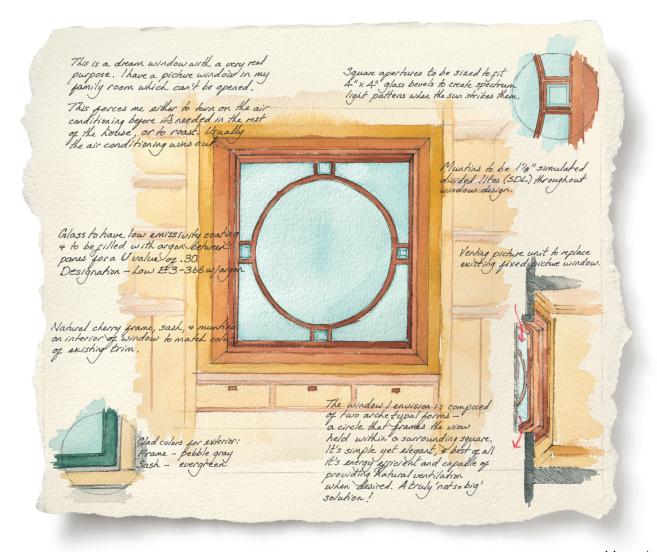
Edwin Fotheringham

If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, nowhere is that more evident than in a residential community, where folks tend to defend fiercely their perceived rights to space, views, or a certain style of architecture. Clients who purchase an empty lot never quite know what to expect until it's time to build. Will the neighbors come bearing a bottle of wine, or a grudge? Density and height are hot-button issues, but so is architectural style. Aesthetic choices, if different than one's own, can seem like an affront. And as the person adding something new to a neighborhood, it's the architect who takes the heat.

In this fragile economy,

homeowners are even more on edge, says attorney Randy Koenig, founding partner at Koenig Jacobsen, Irvine, Calif. That's true particularly in rarefied areas such as coastal California, where lots are dense and expensive, and views directly affect their value. "The inclination of the continued on page 25

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owner and architect is to maximize the size of the building envelope," he continues. "Therein lies the conflict between the owner and the existing homeowners. When property value is the overarching concern, the decision

makers are more likely to

side with the neighbor."

That's why an "our way or no way" attitude is counterproductive, Koenig believes. It's incumbent on architects not only to do their homework, but also to keep the clients' expectations flexible. He's seen at least one case where a headstrong client sued the architect for damages when some aspect of the design couldn't be built. It's an expensive, lose-lose situation—and one that usually can be avoided.

the politics of place

When scuffles do occur, it's often because neighbors have come to think of the empty lot next door as an extension of their home. It's up to the architect or review board to set them straight—gently. Offering an early olive branch can help head off an adversarial relationship, says Charles Cunniffe, AIA, Charles Cunniffe Architects, Aspen, Colo. He talks to the neighbors on his clients' behalf well before a design is proposed (or sends a letter if the neighbor lives elsewhere), offering to create the appropriate screening and to avoid putting lights

or large windows on their side of the house. "When we make that advance approach, the review board can't say we didn't try," he says. "If someone is unreasonable, all you can hope to do is soften them and let them know that you did the best you could with their interests in mind."

In many areas, good manners are regulated by law. Stuart Cohen, FAIA, works in Chicago's North Shore suburbs, where bluff ing the view and state that every property owner has a right to one primary view area. In Douglas Teiger's experience, the system works pretty well. On a recent project in Malibu, Teiger, AIA, a partner at Abramson Teiger Architects, Culver City, Calif., erected story poles depicting a house's proposed silhouette. At the neighbor's request, he was able to shift the house's location and

"forgiving landscapes are ones that are well-vegetated. but in the west, where one can see a trailer 30 miles away, those are the landscapes people really have an obligation to think about."

—ted flato, faia

setbacks on Lake Michigan help to ensure that new buildings don't block lateral views. "While it's possible to use fancy engineering to build right to the edge of a ravine, I think the idea of protecting those kinds of natural features is important," says Cohen, co-principal of Stuart Cohen & Julie Hacker Architects in nearby Evanston, Ill.

Posh enclaves, such as Malibu, Calif., have strict rules to keep peace between "alpha" neighbors. Planning guidelines dictate rules for establishlower its height without compromising the design. When variances are needed, Teiger shows the neighbors the drawings, explains the reasons for the request, and asks them to sign off. "We try to be diplomatic rather than ramming it down their throats," he says. "The building department has an easier time granting a request when the neighbors support the project."

In contentious cases, review boards revert to cold, hard logic. Some jurisdictions use a Solo-

continued on page 26







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monesque approach called "view equity" to determine whether a project should be approved. "If the neighbor has part of a view and the new house has part of a view, and the two are roughly equal, then they tend to say equity has been served," explains Anders Lasater, AIA, of Anders Lasater Architects in Laguna Beach, Calif. "They also look at the lots—are the sizes comparable, and does this lot naturally have a better view than the neighbor's? The board will often say the architect has done X, Y and Z, and that's about all we can expect." Still, Lasater tries to limit his risk by cautioning clients

that there's no guarantee of approval, and his contract clearly states that review board decisions are beyond his control.

under fire

In a perfect world, appealing to reason would nip a nasty confrontation in the bud. But in real life, there's no accounting for taste or hostility. Bates Masi + ARCHITECTS found that out when it tried to build a new office on Main Street in Sag Harbor, N.Y. Co-principals Harry Bates and Paul Masi, AIA, took the high road by designing a low-profile, LEED-ready building that met zoning continued on page 28

due diligence

reat architectural minds seldom think alike, and neither do the neighbors. But, says attorney Randy Koenig of Irvine, Calif.—based Koenig Jacobsen, there are ways to resolve differences peaceably, or at least strategically.

- Research what can be built on the site. Follow the letter of the law, looking at existing structures to figure out what has a reasonable chance of getting the green light. Identify the decision makers who will approve the project.
- If you're requesting variances or interpretations of gray areas, address those issues before you begin design. Tell the architecture committee, building official, or coastal commission that you're working in a gray area and want to push the envelope to your client's benefit.
- Be receptive, but set boundaries. "I heard a story recently about a homeowner with waterfront property continued on page 28



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regulations. The architects made some concessions. such as removing the Cor-Ten steel, and the project passed three review board hearings. But the homeowner next door made life difficult during a depressing, two-year skirmish in which she tried every possible legal foothold to stop the project. In addition to suing the town because it granted a building permit, she and others stood outside the local supermarket to rally support and yelled at the firm's employees when they shopped at the store, Masi says. The firm hired its own attorneys to work with the town's attorneys, and in March a

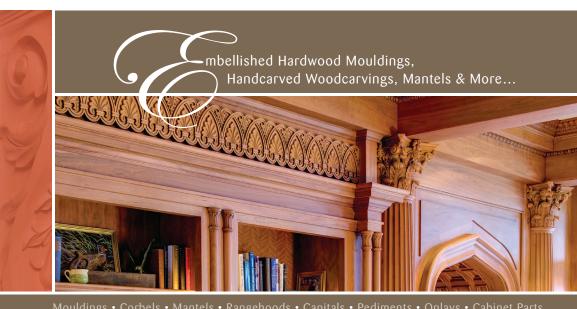
state judge finally ruled in their favor.

At its crux was the longstanding debate between modern and traditional architecture, and Bates Masi had some momentum on its side. The proposed building has won several design awards, and The New York Times' former architecture critic Paul Goldberger, who lives nearby, praised it in letters to the local paper and the town council.

"There is recent construction here mimicking the 18th-century saltbox, but it has nothing to do with today's context—this is no longer a fishing village," Masi says, defending continued on page 30 who called a town meeting that was attended by 35 adjacent homeowners," Koenig says. "The architect tried so hard to please everyone that when he didn't comply with one request, it became a huge problem."

• Use leverage. Koenig recalls a tragic case in which the owner, capitulating to some angry neighbors, demolished and rebuilt part of the house after it had been framed, at a cost of \$1 million above budget. The owner sued the architect, and Koenig successfully sued the homeowners' association on behalf of the architect. Closer scrutiny revealed that the original design was compliant after all. What's more, the association didn't follow its own rules, which required an architect on staff.

"Timing is critical," Koenig says. "For the homeowners' association to get a writ of junction to stop construction takes serious money. They want to avoid that, so our leverage is to appeal to cooler heads, such as a building official. Show examples of where similar projects were approved. No city or homeowners' association can act arbitrarily; they have to follow their own rules."-C.W.







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his cube-shaped building that nevertheless nods to local tradition. Research on the area's old houses showed that the weathered shingles were pulled off and flipped over to increase their lifespan. That discovery inspired Masi and Bates to devise a clip system that allows their building's shingles to be used on both sides.

This battle came out of the blue, since Bates has been designing modern homes in the Hamptons since the 1960s. "We wanted to do something good for the community, and spent time looking for property close to the bus and train, and in a place where our employees could walk to lunch," Masi says. "You don't get rewarded for that, but I'm not discouraged."

If anyone can relate, it's Eric Cobb, AIA, of E. Cobb Architects in Seattle, who is just emerging from his own showdown on a waterfront property. The fracas found its way into the blogosphere when his client's neighbor erected on the nearby dock an inflammatory sign in large print and red type. Worse, however, was the legal and psychological fallout when the neighbor hired a land-use attorney to scrutinize all of the construction documents, looking for small infractions that could indicate permitting

errors. For Cobb, it was a wake-up call.

"We got through this by the skin of our teeth, but the neighbor's attorney couldn't find a flaw," Cobb says. "It's a pretty scary thing to think about—the drawings aren't just for plan reviewers to look at, but you also have motivated citizens going through documents with their attorneys and looking to cause you a pile a trouble. Construction is not very precise you might be 1/4-inch over the height limitations or a chunk of the house might be too close to the property line. We were so buttoned up on our documents that continued on page 32

"when property value is the overarching concern, the decision makers are more likely to side with the neighbor."

-randy koenig



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we were fine."

Lesson learned: Follow the rules and your design instincts, Cobb says. "When you're building something you know will impact the neighbors, make sure you're doing it in a way you can justify and feel good about, and that it's not gratuitous." He lets clients decide whether to involve the neighbors, since he's had mixed results on that score. Once, when he and his client explained their ideas, the neighbors banded together to hire a lawyer. "The advance warning couldn't have hurt our client more," he says. Another client, who had a poor relationship with the owner

"when you're building something you know will impact the neighbors, make sure you're doing it in a way you can justify and feel good about, and that it's not gratuitous."

-eric cobb, aia

next door, decided to build quickly. There were some minor altercations, Cobb says, but they passed.

the slow sell Inclusivity is rarely optional on multifamily projects. Architects of single-family homes can sidestep the educator role, but in highdensity areas they report to a community of critics. To complicate things, debates over zoning issues that affect everyone inadvertently give individuals a platform for airing their own selfinterests. In one recent example, Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS applied for zoning relief when it came up three parking spaces short on a 27-unit condominium in downtown Washington, D.C. The open forum attracted the owners of a penthouse to the east, who complained that the building would rise above their windows. In the end, "the advisory commission understood that they didn't represent the interests of the building occupants," says managing partner Bill Bonstra, FAIA, LEED AP. "Sometimes that gets blurred."

The firm won the case by demonstrating that because of the historic building's continued on page 34

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small footprint and position, underground parking was impossible. "It's best to develop a strategy for how you'll present your project to the community and encourage involvement rather than trying to circumvent it," Bonstra says. "We make people part of the design process so they understand what we're up against."

Gary L. Brewer, AIA, a partner at Robert A.M. Stern Architects, New York, agrees with that approach. "We joke that form follows parking," he says. "Getting the project built is the most important thing, and it's easier to get people to agree to what you're proposing if you bring them

"if the neighbor has part of a view and the new house has part of a view, and the two are roughly equal, then they tend to say equity has been served."

—anders lasater, aia

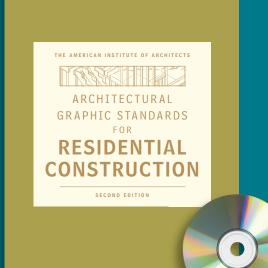
along slowly."

When you put up a condo building next to a prized landmark like the Schindler House in West Hollywood, Calif., it can take years for everyone to have their say. Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (LOHA), Culver City, Calif., spent four years

on Habitat 825, a muchpublicized 19-unit condo project, before completing it in 2006. During that time, the architectural community and the MAK Center, which operates the Schindler House, created a hullabaloo that included a design competition and a

book exploring the theoretical question of what should be built next door. Although the trumped-up friction got on their nerves, the architects understood it as a publicity-seeking opportunity for the MAK Center, and the stir "helped us, as well, in marketing exposure," says Donnie Schmidt, senior associate at LOHA. "It was an apples and oranges type of discussion—one going down the path of reality, the others hypothetical. But we embraced that discussion and read the proposals. And as density increases, it's critical that we engage the community on these is-

continued on page 36



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sues." (For more on Habitat 825, residential architect's 2009 Project of the Year, see pages 22–25 in the March/April 2009 issue.)

While nobody wants the neighbors designing clients' houses, it's an argument all architects can embrace on one level or another. Whether it's a custom home or condo building, "part of the pleasure of living in a house is that you're respectful of a house next door or around the corner," Flato says, admitting that harmony is easier achieved in some parts of the country than others. "Forgiving landscapes are ones that are well-vegetated," he says. "But in the

"getting the project built is the most important thing, and it's easier to get people to agree to what you're proposing if you bring them along slowly."

—gary 1. brewer, aia

west, where one can see a trailer 30 miles away, those are the landscapes people really have an obligation to think about."

To illustrate the point, Flato recalls designing a house for his sister on the Yellowstone River in Montana, which he partially hid among cottonwoods. Not far down the river, a wellknown California architect had designed a large boxy house on the water's edge. "It looks like the perfect thing for a walkway in Venice, Italy, each house yelling and screaming and having a good time," he says. "But placing it right on the river, even when it's good, is a dangerous thing to have done. At first I thought, 'Hey, I like that thing.' But others found it offensive, and they were right."

In the realm of residential design, though, almost anything goes, and it's up to the homeowners to hide the offending view. "I remember when we built something for a client and someone else built something horrendous next door," Flato says. "We went back and added more landscaping to try to fix what we had. Ultimately, it's the neighbor's problem. If they don't like it, they have to figure out a way around it." ra



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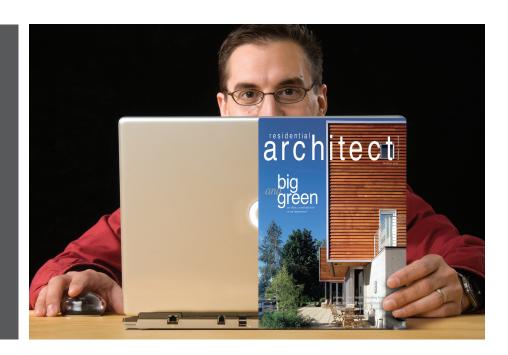


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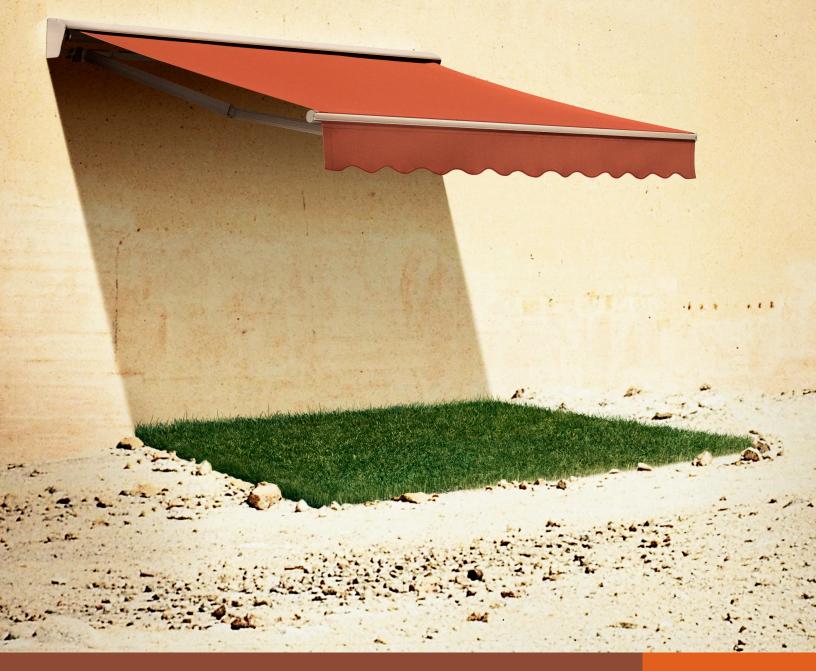
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mid-century modernized

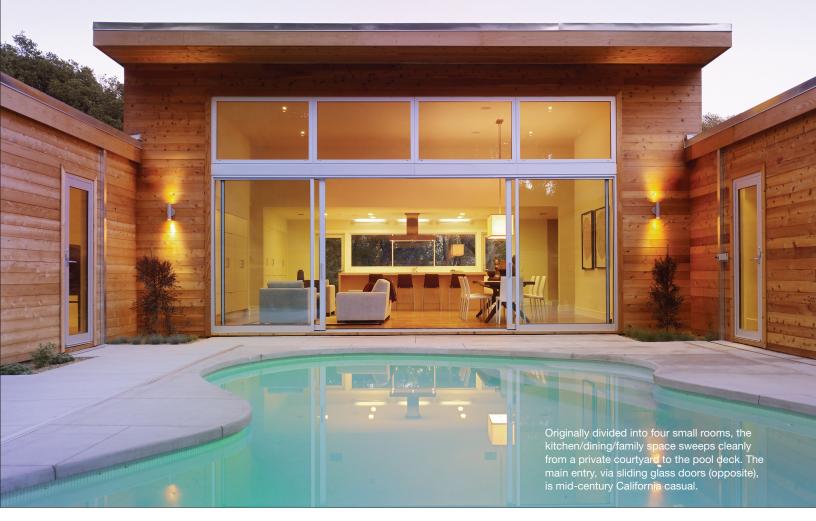
lightly built and heavily consumptive, our early modern houses are ripe for new millennium remodels.



new morning

ulie Dowling, AIA, had only to lay eyes on Tiburon House to see that the residence needed significant rehabilitation. But she also recognized what a strong candidate she had on her hands. "It was a classic mid-century California house," the San Francisco–based architect explains, with "long, lean lines, cantilevered overhangs, and the indoor/outdoor feeling that was a general feature of mid-century houses." So while her interventions yielded a functionally new house, she says, in spirit, "this was a project of editing, not adding." The outcome reflects both Dowling's sensitivity to her subject and the enduring appeal of mid-century modernism, even in an era of heightened environmental concern.

Dowling retained the building's H-shaped floor plan, which embraces a public courtyard to the east and a private pool deck to the west, but cleared a nest of interior partitions to create an open kitchen/dining/family room at the house's center. "The idea was to open up the house to this great, funky kidney-shaped pool," says Dowling, who thickened one interior wall of the space with flush storage cabinets, leaving clear sight lines to the pool area.



project: Tiburon House, Tiburon, Calif.architect: Dowling Kimm Studios, San Franciscogeneral contractor: Paul White Construction,Santa Rosa, Calif.

project size: 3,500 square feet (before and after)

site size: 1 acre

construction cost: \$350 per square foot **photography:** Matthew Millman







performance upgrades

- Light-colored "cool roof"
- Photovoltaic-powered pool equipment
- High-efficiency heat pump
- Low-VOC finishes and wool carpeting
- Cabinetry material produced from scrap wood
- New windows with solar-control low-E glazing

Aluminum-frame sliding glass doors wrap the corner living room (opposite, above), opening to elevated views of the San Francisco Bay. An open interior gives the kitchen (opposite, below) three directions of exposure. High glazing (right) brings daylight deep into the house.

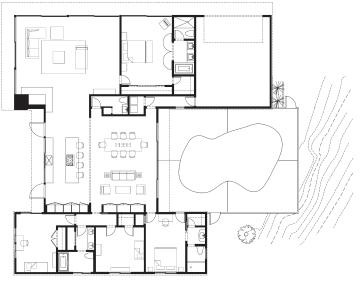
She gave equal consideration to the site's expansive San Francisco Bay view, replacing punched openings at the living room and master bedroom with wallspanning aluminum sliding doors.

One remnant of 1960s exuberance sacrificed without remorse was the pitched roof that crowned the house's midsection. "It was a Pizza Hut," remembers Dowling, who replaced the awkward form with a flat roof that steps up from the kitchen to the dining/family area. High glazing facing the pool "brings more light into the most interior sections of the house," she points out. In keeping with the original layout, guests enter informally, via a sliding glass door to the living room. "This is such a quintessential California home," she observes. "There are so many opportunities to have an indoor/outdoor existence."

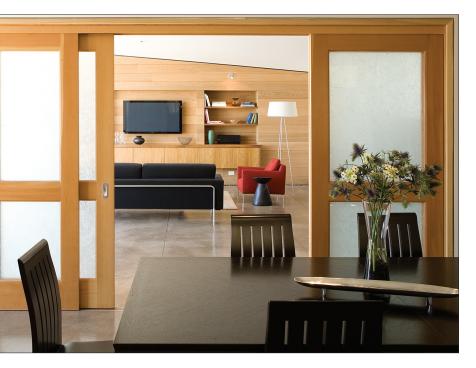
The Marin County climate cooperates in that regard. "About nine months of the year you can leave all the doors open, and the temperature inside is just perfect," she says. The greening of this remodel, therefore, began with a head start in energy conservation. Still, its all-new mechanical systems, lighting, windows, reflective white roof, and photovoltaic-powered pool equipment improve significantly on the original spec.

Interior materials represent a sustainable update of the 1960s palette. "The fireplace is clad in ceramic tile reminiscent of the split stone that was used in mid-century modern homes," Dowling points out. The cabinetry picks up the tile's striated pattern with a material called Echo Wood. "It's a reconstituted veneer material," she explains. "It's actually white oak, but it's made from waste materials." Wood floors are engineered walnut; carpet and padding, 100 percent wool. All finishes are low-VOC. That the freshness of this project runs more than skin deep is a measure of both the vision of the original design and Dowling's skilled, enthusiastic effort "to take this great structure, bring out all these great features, and add what was missing."—b.d.s.





mid-century modernized





Rectifying a past wrong, Ohashi Design Studio opened up this '60s ranch to water views and improved its energy efficiency with new insulation, in-floor radiant heating, tankless water heaters, and an entirely new mechanical system (above). Sliding Douglas fir doors with rice paper glass provide dining privacy when desired (top).

ranch revival

hether it's a faux Mediterranean McMansion in Florida or a ranch in California, a tract home typically doesn't conjure up design excellence. There's just something about historical pastiche and cookie-cutter repetition that feels soulless. So when a pair of design-savvy house hunters found and purchased this tract home in El Cerrito, Calif., they called on Emeryville, Calif.—based Ohashi Design Studio to tap its unrealized potential.

Built sometime in the 1960s, the ranch was nothing special. It had an uninspired entrance, an unfortunate sunroom addition, and a convoluted floor plan with a tangle of dark rooms. In addition to a more streamlined design and light-filled interiors, "the clients wanted a house that was better suited for entertaining," says principal Alan Ohashi, AIA. They also wanted to rectify the ranch's most egregious flaw—its failure to exploit the view to San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. Energy efficiency was a major programmatic requirement, but the couple insisted it be seamlessly integrated. "They wanted to take advantage of any new energy efficiency technology available, but they wanted a beautiful house more than anything else, so the technologies had to work with the design," Ohashi explains.

To preserve the context of the neighborhood, Ohashi and his wife and design principal, Joy, retained the house's front portion containing the bedrooms, garage, and breakfast area and razed the rest. They organized the rebuilt structure in a large, open plan, with delineations for the main spaces and floor-to ceiling glass to promote views and light. They improved the building envelope with new insulation and topped it with a standing seam metal roof integrated with thin-film solar panels to supplement grid dependence. Radiant tubes embedded in the custom-





El Cerrito, Calif.

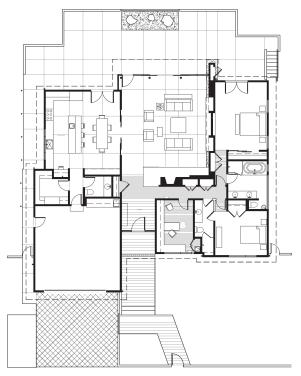
architect: Ohashi Design Studio,
Emeryville, Calif.

general contractor: Creative
Spaces, Oakland, Calif.

project size: 2,230 square feet
(before); 2,435 square feet (after)
site size: Approximately 0.2 acre
construction cost: \$400 per
square foot

photography: John Sutton

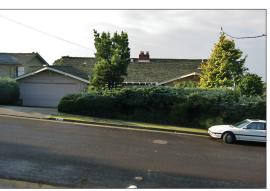
mid-century modernized



colored concrete floor provide heating, and on-demand water heaters fitted with recirculating pumps further promote efficiency. The firm also added obligatory Energy Star appliances and dual-flush toilets.

Ohashi says the clients' fondness for materiality—most notably their "love of unfinished wood with character" and other tactile characteristics—drove many of the firm's design decisions. Showcased materials include white cedar at the entrance and rear, red cedar interior paneling, luminescent tile encasing the fireplace, and striated ceramic in the baths.

The completed project not only gave the clients the view-embracing, energy-efficient house they had craved, it also proved a bell-wether for the firm. "This project is one of our earliest experiences with using sustainable design principles, and we're happy with the way we were able to integrate them into the design," the architect says. "Every project we do now employs as many sustainable strategies as possible."—n.f.m.



The revamped entry sequence and street elevation are much more pleasing from the curb (above), while thin-film photovoltaic panels applied to the standing-seam metal roof create a 3-kilowatt system that's largely hidden in plain sight (right).





performance upgrades

- Newly insulated building envelope
- Galvanized standing seam metal roof with an integrated 3-kilowatt photovoltaic solar system
- Double-glazed Energy Star-rated windows
- Radiant heating embedded in concrete floors
- Tankless water heaters
- · Recirculating hot water
- Dual-flush toilets
- Low-flow faucets and showerheads
- Energy Star-rated appliances
- Certified renewable Canadian cedar





most improved

ccording to architect Alex Terry, AIA, 1960s-era houses in San Francisco tend to share some common problems. "A lot of them are maxed out," he notes, referring to homes that are built right up to the property line. "They're quite large and boxy much of the time. It makes you think, maybe we could use some of this square footage for outside space."

That's exactly what he and his brother and business partner Ivan Terry did at this remodel of a bland 1963 house in the city's Noe Valley neighborhood. The original building had a cluttered, confusing floor plan that took no notice of available views and provided little access to the outdoors. With their client's blessing, the Terrys opted to gut the interiors, keeping the home's shell and floor structure. They shifted the public areas to the north end of the top floor and opened up that level, the better to take in San Francisco's justly famous scenery. And they removed volumes on the back of the house, replacing them with a balcony and a terrace that connect the 2,300-square-foot house with its formerly neglected yard. "We actually made the new footprint smaller, to get the outdoor space," Alex Terry explains. "We made it a tube instead of a box."

A dark outdoor entry stair was enlarged to form a pocket of light and air in the center of the house. Alternatively, the owners can reach the main floor via a new, skylit interior stair entered at the garden level. Along with the outdoor rooms and the bounty of glass on the rear, north-facing wall, the brothers used an additional passive cooling strategy: a double exterior wall. They designed the home's ipe cladding to sit ³/₁₆ of an inch away from the structural wall, creating an air gap. When



project: Choy Residence, San Francisco

architect: Terry & Terry Architecture, Berkeley, Calif.

general contractor: Quick Connect Construction, San Rafael, Calif. structural engineer: Santos & Urrutia Structural Engineers, San Francisco

project size: 2,500 square feet (before), 2,300 square feet (after)

site size: 0.07 acre

construction cost: withheld photography: Ethan Kaplan

Photography







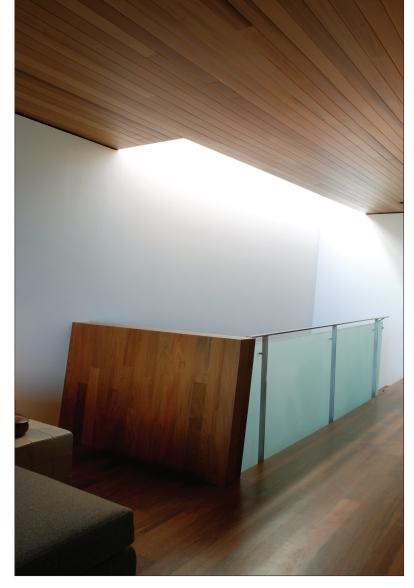


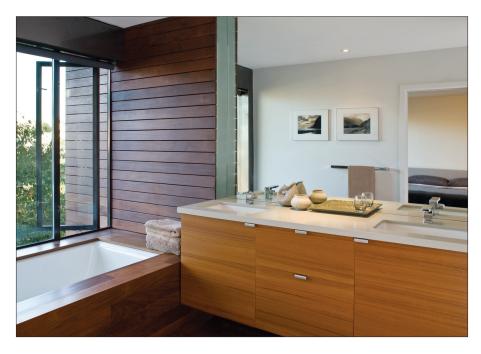
The home's newly established ties to the outdoors affect each and every space. A top-floor skylight pulls natural light into the interior stairwell (right), while generous windows allow for daylight and views in spaces such as the kitchen/dining/living room (opposite) and the master bath (below). The designers created a sense of continuity by bringing the ipe siding inside the house. "Ipe is a very durable material," says architect Alex Terry. "It will last 30 years or so."

sunshine warms the ipe, the hot air that results dissipates up through the gap, rather than transferring directly to the house.

The client hopes to generate power on site in the future, so the Terrys and builder Perry Fong included as much infrastructure as they could. They angled the roof slightly and built in conduits and mounts to prepare it for the eventual installation of 56-inch-by-25-inch solar panels. And they ran a drain from the roof to the basement to facilitate future rainwater collection for garden irrigation.

A steel moment frame strengthens the back portion of the house, which didn't meet code before the renovation. With this structural reinforcement, as well as a newly durable skin, forward-thinking eco-features, and calm interior spaces, the once-throwaway building has evolved into a bastion of permanence.—*m.d.*



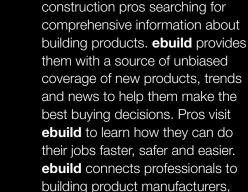


performance upgrades

- Increased daylighting and natural ventilation
- Double exterior wall for passive cooling
- Overhangs to protect against wind and sun
- Rainwater collection and solar panel infrastructure in place
- High-efficiency water heater and furnace
- Reuse of majority of existing structure

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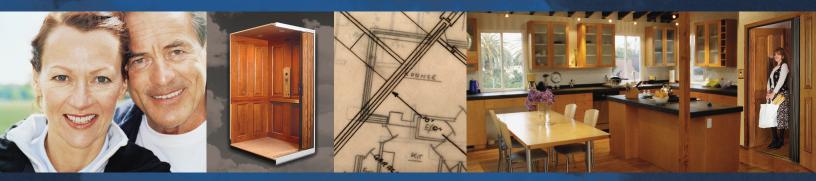
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reclaimed from what?

products made from recycled content require careful scrutiny.

by nigel f. maynard

t first glance, using recycled-content building products seems like a win-win proposition. Diverting waste from landfills is a noble deed, and saving natural resources is equally commendable. No wonder green advocates push this specification strategy.

"The materials in our recycling bins ... are the raw materials for recycled-content products," argues the Santa Cruz, Calif.—based nonprofit environmental group Ecology Action. Incorporating recycled-content building materials, the group says, reduces waste, and helps eliminate pollution.

The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery's economic argument says that buying these products begets markets for the collected materials that are used to manufacture new products, which creates jobs and strengthens the economy. Even LEED for Homes, in section MR 2.2, advocates products containing recycled content.

check sources But like most choices

But like most choices associated with sustainable building, the issue of using products derived from waste is murky. All recycled-content products aren't created equal: A product might be made from waste, but it might have offgassing properties or it may require more maintenance. As a result, architects must spec carefully.

Even architects with a known affinity for sustainable design and products view the current marketplace with wariness. "Recycled-content products are a very small part of my work," says Jeff Sties, AIA, LEED AP, principal of SUNBIOSIS in Charlottesville, Va. Sties, a former materials researcher for William McDonough + Partners, says the market for such products is better than it used to be but he believes more needs doing. Frankly, he adds, "There aren't a lot of products that I consider to be good enough."

Eric Corey Freed, LEED AP, principal of organicARCHITECT in San Francisco and Palm Springs, Calif., tends to agree. "This might surprise people, but using recycledcontent products is pretty low on my priority list" when doing a house, he says. The approach sounds good in theory, he explains, but may not always be vi-



Courtesy Klip BioTechnologies

Recycled-content products such as EcoTop are starting to gain widespread attention. The product is made from a 50/50 blend of FSC-certified post-consumer recycled paper and bamboo fiber.

able in practice. "There's a disconnect between what's advocated and what's best, and it comes from wanting to promote green products," he explains. "Oftentimes we are putting things in our houses we shouldn't be or recycling things that shouldn't be recycled." As an example, Freed points to flooring that's made from vulcanized rubber or recycled-waste tires. "It's fine for outdoor use, but it shouldn't be used inside because of air quality issues."

Indoor pollution is a major concern for the GREEN-GUARD Environmental Institute, an industry-independent nonprofit that establishes acceptable

standards for building materials and other products. According to founder Marilyn Black, LEED AP, the institute isn't fully convinced of the merits of some of the products being marketed as recycled. "While we fully support efforts to use products made from recycled content, it's critical that we evaluate and understand the potential health impacts of these products before using them," she says. Flyash is but one example. Used in concrete, flyash is widely believed to be safe because it's "locked" into the cured concrete. But it should not be used in drywall or ceiling tiles, the group says,

continued on page 56

doctor spec

because the heavy metals in the ash could be released into the indoor air in the form of dust.

AMD Architecture principal Angela M. Dean, AIA, LEED AP, definitely considers her client's health when she specs products, but she says other issues—durability, life cycle cost, environmental impact—come into play as well. "We typically place recycled products higher on the list than nonrecycled, but only if they meet the previous criteria," the Salt Lake City—based architect explains.

Doug Graybeal, AIA, principal of Graybeal Architects in Carbondale, Colo., also takes a holistic approach to his material decisions. He considers recycled-content products in his equation, but other factors take priority. "We're always looking at salvaged, reclaimed, recycledcontent, and recyclable materials, but we also look at whether or not it's recycled at the same level at the end of its life," he says. Material comparisons also must consider factors such as "what kinds of chemicals are included in the content," he adds.

These days, recycledcontent products are hard to ignore. Manufacturers, trying to capitalize on the green zeitgeist, are adding their own waste material to products and marketing them as green. It's not exactly cheating, Sties says, but it's not far off. "Postindustrial recycling is usually scrap from [manufacturers'] own factories," he says. "It's the low-hanging fruit." His preferred alternative is products made with post-consumer waste. Post-consumer means that "this material was reclaimed from the built environment and suggests a new business model, as well as a new product," he explains.

But even architects who vet materials with rigor agree the market has worth-while offerings. Dean's list of favorites includes cellulose insulation made from newsprint, flyash concrete, composite lumber, and metal roofing. Graybeal is a fan of cellulose and reclaimed wood siding, and Freed likes composite decking made with shopping bags and wood pallets.

Among other offerings, you can now buy flooring made from reconstituted leather scraps and panels made from renewable or reclaimed agricultural byproducts. Tile and countertop products are two of the richest categories. Tile manufacturers have always reused their production castoffs, but many now use up to 100 percent curbside glass, aircraft aluminum, and salvaged bricks.

The notion of recycled content may not yet be fully formed, but it's a step in the right direction, architects say. "It gets to the root of what [William] McDonough is doing with cradle-to-grave and cradle-to-cradle," Graybeal says. McDonough envisions a database of materials that are recycled or reused into



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perpetuity, never entering the waste stream. Some exist, but the idea is to develop more.

Whatever product you use, those at GREEN-GUARD recommend a careful screening process. "As a rule of thumb, be wary of recycled-content products that are made from materials whose original purpose was something other than close contact/indoor use—such as an automotive tire being 'recycled' into flooring," Black warns.

Freed, author of recently released *Green\$ense: Rating the Real Payoff from 50 Green Home Projects* (The Taunton Press), has his own process for product assessment. Some of the questions he asks: Where does the material come from? What are the byproducts of its manufacture? How is it delivered and installed? He also inquires about maintenance, potential health

effects, and what happens at the end of its life. "These questions don't have clear answers, but that's OK," he says. What matters is that they "raise issues and start a dialogue."

In the end, Freed says he makes choices that stay true to his priorities. "I'd prefer something that's healthy and nontoxic rather than something made with 100 percent recycled vinyl or plastic," he explains.

If sustainability "is ever going to mean anything," Sties says, "we must embrace the cradle-to-cradle design flow from a materials standpoint." And yet he cautions that recycledcontent products may not always be the best option. If given a choice between "a recycled-content product from California and a locally sourced virgin product," the Virginia-based architect argues, "I choose the virgin every time." ra



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new material

by nigel f. maynard

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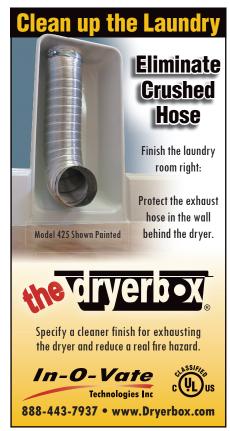
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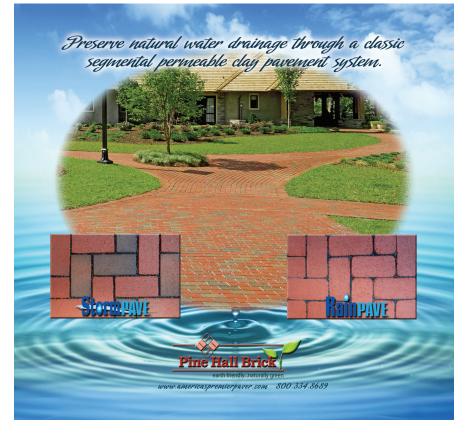
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bell architects

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Two years ago BELL Architects was running out of room for its 14-person staff, so firm leadership felt the time had come to buy a building. The Washington, D.C.–based architects specialize in preservation and adaptive reuse with a sustainable focus, so naturally, they bought



a 4,500-square-foot, circa late
1880s row house. "We had
our choice of five buildings
that were available," explains
principal T. David Bell, AIA,
LEED AP. "This one"—located
in the city's newly revitalized
Northwest section near the

convention center—"was in the worst condition, but we chose it because it already had power."

Using a combination of salvaged and reuse strategies, BELL tightened the envelope with foam insulation, re-







Photos: Anice Hoachlander

stored the staircase with replicated pieces, renovated the original windows, refinished the pine floors, exposed the beams, and commissioned a new reception desk. A sleek kitchen contains a document storage area with paper-based and steel countertops, and for added flair, the front door is painted in eye-catching electric blue. Says Bell: "We wanted to be historic, but we also wanted to be bold."—*nigel f. maynard*

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